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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
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Agenda item 4

OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE: DRAFT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS AND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

III. COMMITMENTS (paras. 23-35)

(Section III of the draft Habitat agenda)

Text submitted by Working Group II on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.165/PC.3/4

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III. COMMITMENTS

[The Global Plan of Action is drawn up in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The implementation of the recommendations contained in this Plan of Action is the sovereign right of each State consistent with national laws and development priorities, as well as with full respect for the various religious, ethical values, cultural backgrounds, and philosophical convictions of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.]

23. [Embracing the foregoing principles we, as States participating in this Conference, commit ourselves to implement the Habitat Agenda, including through subnational, national, subregional, and regional plans of action and other policies and programmes drafted and executed in cooperation with all key actors at all levels and supported by the international community, taking into account that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, including adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, and they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.]

[23 bis. In implementing these commitments we shall give special attention to the circumstances and needs of people who are homeless, living in poverty, or are in some other way disadvantaged or vulnerable, especially women, children, older people, indigenous people, displaced people or people with disabilities.]

A. Adequate shelter for all

24. [We reaffirm our commitment to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, as set out in numerous international instruments. In this context, we recognize the fundamental obligation of Governments to enable people to obtain shelter and to protect and improve dwellings and neighbourhoods.] We commit ourselves to the goal of improving living and working conditions on an equitable and sustainable basis, so that everyone will have adequate shelter that is healthy, safe, secure, accessible, and affordable and that includes basic services, facilities and amenities and the enjoyment of freedom from discrimination in housing and legal security of tenure. We shall implement and promote this objective in a manner fully consistent with human rights standards.

25. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

[(a) Ensuring consistency and coordination of macroeconomic policies and shelter policies and strategies in order to support resource mobilization, employment generation and poverty eradication;]

(a bis) Ensuring that women and men have equal access to resources, including credit opportunities, and the right to inheritance and ownership of land and property;

(b) Ensuring legal security of tenure and equal access to serviced land, including through a diverse range of tenure options;

(c) Promoting broad, non-discriminatory access to open, efficient, effective, and appropriate mechanisms for housing finance, including credit opportunities for all;

(d) Promoting construction methods, materials and technologies that are affordable, safe, efficient and accessible and that emphasize greater use of local materials and human resources, that encourage and support design efficiency and energy-saving methods, and that are environmentally sound and protective of human health;

(e) Increasing the supply of affordable housing and tenure options, including rental, cooperative and home ownership, through public, community and private sector initiatives;

(f) Promoting the rehabilitation, upgrading and maintenance of existing housing stock;

(f bis) Providing basic services and promoting supply of facilities and amenities;

(f ter) Recognizing and respecting clear and enforceable rights and obligations of both owners and tenants;

(g) Eradicating discrimination in the access to shelter that is based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;

[(h) Promoting shelter and basic services for the homeless, internally displaced, migrants, indigenous groups, and victims of natural and human-made disasters;]

[(i) Promoting access to local basic facilities for education and health services;]

[(j) Protecting within the national context the traditional rights to land and other resources of pastoralists, fishery workers, and nomadic and indigenous people and strengthening land management;]

[(k) Avoiding forced evictions, when possible; when unavoidable, to strive for rehabilitation.]

B. Sustainable human settlements

26. We commit ourselves to the goal of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world by developing economies that will make efficient use of resources within the carrying capacity of ecosystems and by providing all people with equal opportunities for a healthy, safe and productive life in harmony with nature and their cultural heritage and spiritual and cultural values, thereby ensuring social progress.

27. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

(a) Promoting socially integrated human settlements, combating segregation, discriminatory and other exclusionary policies and practices and recognizing and respecting the rights of all, especially women and the poor;

(b) Acknowledging and harnessing the potential of the informal sector, where appropriate, in providing housing and services for the poor;

(c) Promoting changes in production and consumption patterns and settlements structures that will protect natural resources - including water, air, biodiversity, energy and land, thereby providing a healthy living environment for all;

(d) Promoting spatial development patterns that reduce transport demand, and creating efficient, effective and environmentally sound transport systems that improve accessibility to work, goods, services and amenities;

(e) Preserving productive land in urban and rural areas and protecting fragile ecosystems from the negative impacts of human settlements;

(f) Protecting and maintaining the historic and cultural heritage, including traditional shelter and settlements patterns, as appropriate, as well as landscapes and urban flora and fauna in open and green spaces;

(g) Enabling competitive and sustainable economic development that will attract investments, generate employment and provide revenues for human settlements development;

(h) Alleviating undesired impacts of structural adjustment and economic transition on human settlements;

(i) Reducing the impact on human settlements of natural and human-made disasters.

C. Enablement

28. We commit ourselves to the strategy of enabling all key actors in the public, private and community sectors to play an effective role - at national, state/provincial, metropolitan, and local levels - in human settlements and shelter development.

29. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

(a) Exercising public authority and using public resources with transparency and accountability;

(b) Decentralizing authority and resources, as appropriate, and functions and responsibilities to the level most effective in addressing the needs of people in their settlements;

(c) Promoting institutional and legal frameworks and capacity-building conducive to civic engagement and broad-based participation in human settlements development;

(d) Capacity-building for human settlements management and development;

(e) Supporting enabling frameworks - both institutional and legal - for mobilizing financial resources for sustainable shelter and human settlements development;

(f) Promoting equal access to reliable information, utilizing, where appropriate, modern communications technology and networks.

D. Financing shelter and human settlements

30. We commit ourselves to strengthening existing financial mechanisms and, where appropriate, developing new mechanisms for financing the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, which will mobilize increased sources of finance - public, private, multilateral, and bilateral - at the international, regional, national and local levels, and will promote the efficient, effective and accountable allocation and management of resources.

31. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

(a) Stimulating national and local economies, through enabling competitive and sustainable economic development that will attract public and international financial resources and private investments, generate employment and increase revenues, providing a stronger financial base to support shelter and human settlements development;

(b) Strengthening fiscal and financial management capacity, at all levels, to fully develop the taxation base, pricing mechanisms and other sources of revenue;

(c) Enhancing public revenue through the use, as appropriate, of fiscal instruments that are conducive to environmentally friendly practices in order to promote direct support for sustainable human settlements;

(d) Strengthening regulatory and legal frameworks to enable markets to work and to facilitate independent initiative and creativity, as well as to encourage a wide range of partnerships to finance shelter and human settlements development;

(e) Promoting increased equitable access to credit for all;

(f) Adopting, where appropriate, transparent, timely, predictable, and performance-based mechanisms for transfer of funds between different levels of government;

(g) Targeting, where appropriate, subsidies to those who are not served by the market, and promoting appropriate credit mechanisms and other instruments to address their needs.

E. International cooperation

[32. We commit ourselves - in the interests of international peace, security, justice and stability - to enhancing international cooperation and partnerships that will assist in the implementation of the national and the global plans of action and the attainment of the goals of the Habitat Agenda, by contributing to and participating in multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation programmes and institutional arrangements and technical and financial assistance programmes, by the exchange of appropriate technology, by the collection, analysis and dissemination of information about shelter and human settlements, and by international networking.

[33. We further commit ourselves to the objectives of:

[(a) Striving for the fulfilment of the accepted target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance, as soon as possible, as well as increasing, within it, the share for funding for human settlements and shelter development;

[(b) Using resources and economic instruments in an effective, efficient and equitable manner at the local, national, regional and international levels;

[(c) Promoting responsive international cooperation between public, private and non-profit, non-governmental, and community organizations.]

F. Assessing progress

34. We commit ourselves to monitor and evaluate, within our own countries, efforts to implement national plans of action, while striving to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development.

35. We further commit ourselves to the objective of enhancing the role and strengthening the institutional capacity of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as an agency of coordination and cooperation assisting the States Members of the United Nations to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, using shelter and urban indicators and best practices as a basis for assessing global conditions and trends in shelter and human settlements development.